

# Carbusters

magazine

March-May 2006  
No. 26

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# Whose Streets?

**O**n a bitter cold Wednesday evening I left the Carbusters office on my way to the cinema. At one of Prague's inhospitable zebra crossings, I saw a car fast approaching. I had the right of way, but the driver showed no sign of letting me cross. He cut in front of me, but before speed-ing away, unrolled the window, leaned over and bellowed, I mean really screamed, "What do you want?! What do you want?!" This is the culture of rage and frustration through which car drivers express their "right" to drive.

If we do not want the automobile to swallow and chew up our neighbourhoods, we cannot continue to nurture and support this obsessive culture. The main theme in this issue is loosely centred around education, although it is just as much about children and their relationships to their neighbourhoods, city streets and the automobile. A number of perspectives are on offer. Sara Stout looks at teaching children to ride a bike in the city, while on the other side of the world in Bangladesh Debra Efroymsen and Ziaur Rahman Litu show how children's knowledge of the streets and their ability to navigate them is largely influenced by class.

This is partly about educating children about automobile culture in a way to counter the massive amount of advertising that constantly tells children, and everyone else, that the car is one of society's most desired commodities. Vincent Aronio writes how easy it is for young people to become car dependent when ever since they were young, their parents drove them everywhere. It is also about educating children about the alternatives. Learning how to ride a bike is a memorable experience for many, but these skills are not always adequate to navigate dangerous city streets.

In Prague, one rarely sees a child riding a bicycle. One of the groups in Prague trying to change this is Auto\*Mat, an open project that joins artists, filmmakers, cyclists, pedestrians and anyone else interested in making the city a more pleasant place to live.



René Jakl

## Mobility Justice Update

On January 10 in New York City, a judge ruled that the city's parade permit law was unconstitutional and so charges against eight Critical Mass participants were dropped. The judge said that the law "constitutes a burden on free expression that is more than the First Amendment can bear." It would allow police to arrest people who simply joined the ride along the way. Since August 2004, the police have arrested over 350 cyclists for parading without a permit. Although there are other similar cases pending and judges there are not bound to follow this decision, the cyclists' attorney, Gideon

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# letters



visit. You see. Since the last time we were bumper to bumper I've had something of an epiphany. That's right. Reach for your pen and notebook, well you might. My case is a landmark until recently out of sight.

It happened the other night

## No More Hopping On and Off

So, it happened. The beloved London Route-master buses have been forced into retirement, reduced to a humiliating tourist route between Trafalgar Square and the Tower of London. For the last year and half the 38 Routemaster bus had been my primary bus route into central London. I adored this bus. Now it is no more. No more double-decker. No more calypso-singing conductor collecting your fare. No more hopping on and hopping off.

The death of the Routemaster is just one more example of the complete in-ability amongst city planners, officials, etc. to consider qualitative factors (aesthetics, atmosphere, emotional attachment). They think only in terms of quantitative measures (repair budgets, conductors' salaries, maximum occupancy). The Routemaster was aesthetically beautiful. Its close quarters encouraged conversation with strangers. It was a pleasure to grab its railing, hop on its passenger deck and climb up its twisting staircase. In short, it made people happy. These are factors that don't sit comfortably within the columns of an account-

tant's ledger or the boxes of a planner's spread-sheet program.

To add insult to injury, these new buses are also quite simply quantitatively worse. The 38 route is now noticeably slower (a route that once took 40 minutes now often takes a full hour). I can only guess that this is due to the length of time required for the doors to open and close at each stop and a result of streets congested with buses that are now over twice the length (a consequence of the move from two decks to one). I would also be interested in seeing how cost effective these new buses are to date, because I for one (and I know I'm not alone) have been riding fare-free since the change. It's not that I'm unwilling to pay; I'm simply waiting for the conductor to cheerfully ask for my fare.

Joel McKim  
London, UK

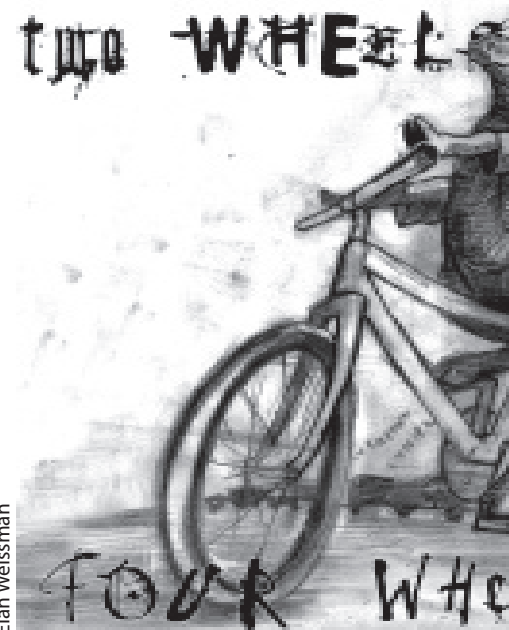
## Part Car

[Ed.: The following is an excerpt from a spoken word poem. You are encouraged to recite it out loud to friends and family.]

Dear Herr Doctor, I've only come to register the fact that this shall be our last

when I awoke choking and spluttering like never before checking my dashboard with a start to read that though it was light, it was only four in the morning. That I was a wreck.

My mind in a spin, turning over and over until it flooded I tell ya, with one single thing: That I was hard and I was complete yet in possession of wheels where once I had feet.



Eian Weissman

By the way, is that your Mini parked out there?  
 Sorry about the dent. Though I am aggressive  
 aggressive these days, it frankly wasn't meant  
 (though I am part car, and God didn't give me  
 bumpers for nothing ha ha). Ha! Well there you are. I'm overtaking myself.  
 I've gone too far, I've said it, I've said it:

I AM PART CAR...

PART CAR!

Aaah I know  
 what you'll say,  
 'a rationalisation, disassociation, fetishisation,  
 'And yet, I am happy this way.[...]

To walk down the street now is no more than pedestrian. And with horses a thing of the past, there's no hope for the equestrian. Besides cars equal freedom Doc and nature at your feet.  
 And like a girl with her pony Doc, cars are hard to beat. ...And I do feel more loved, say what you will. Life without car was the biggest pill.  
 (...Your Mini out there, she's a bit of alright.  
 ...Fully manual, am I right?)

Now Doc I cruise and where a heart used to beat a catalytic converter chirpily cheeps.  
 It loves just a little and not too



much  
 not too fem and not too butch.  
 ROAD WORTHY.  
 I've made my peace with the oil industry.  
 Asphalted roads now make perfect sense  
 when caring for one's chassis costs dollars nickels and cents. With the military industrial complex I've made my pact. I certainly have fewer qualms about the invasion of Iraq. [...]

Vroom vroom doctor have you something to say?  
 Your eyebrows are knit in a most provocative way.  
 You don't believe me, do you?  
 Then perhaps you're in denial. Or could it

be you're jealous of my interior style?

For it is I/Car, not you, that has fewer contradictions.  
 You think car serves you and a life that's gotten faster / Forgetting the King of Speed is now Lord and Master. Your delusions of grandeur Doc simply won't do.  
 You serve car, not it serves you.

Maria Warton  
 Montréal, Canada

War on Terror in Texas  
 I accidentally spit on a truck today in Texas [ed: you what?!] while cycling and I was verbally threatened by the driver. He even opened his door to get out and knock me off my bike. I am a pacifist so I said go right ahead. Luckily the light changed and we parted ways.

Mark A. Christian  
 Dallas, Texas, USA

### This Kid's Life: Priceless

Have you seen the advertisement on TV by Mastercard or Cisa, I forget which, where they show the price of a few things, and then "smile on a loved one's face: priceless" (i.e. when you give them one of the gifts you buy with your credit card).

If I were a millionaire, I would fund a TV commercial saying "price of a Mercedes: \$39,000" "price of a HumVee: \$49,000" then cut to the child in hospital who was hit



This cyclist carved in a traditional style in a door panel comes from the Yoruba of south-western Nigera, the largest ethnic group in Africa

by the hummer or BMW and "This kid's life: priceless" and then in the next version, cut to a narrow tree-lined lane, with no cars whatsoever and the caption "A peaceful lifestyle: priceless."

"Ryano"  
 Tokyo, Japan

### Carfree "Agony Aunt"

Anna Semlyen is the Martha Stewart of Carfree.

I absolutely intend that as a compliment.

Todd Edelman  
 Prague, Czech Republic

### Abandoning Ship

After reading the letter from Richard Register in the last issue of Carbusters, I sent the following letter to Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club, of which I am a long-standing member, with copies to many other officers in the club.

Dear Carl,

I was happy to have the chance to meet with you when you visited the Grand Canyon Chapter, and to have a chance to chat for a while after the festivities. At the time, I told you that I was happy that you were guiding the elephant of the Sierra Club, and you very wisely made sure I saw you as the Mahout



“When you drive, society becomes an obstacle. Pedestrians, bicycles, traffic calming, speed limits, the law: all become a nuisance to be wished away. The more you drive, the more bloody-minded and individualistic you become.”

- George Monbiot, “The Anti-Social Bastards in our Midst”



# CAR CULT REVIEW



## Playing with Reality

If Nissan gets its way, the car of the future will have car drivers playing video games from behind the wheel of a car. With the Urge concept car, the carmaker has teamed up with Microsoft, ignored any “we can do it, but should we?” doubts, and designed a car for adults who refuse to grow up.

Maybe this is what happens when you rely on surveys of children to tell you what kind of cars to build.

The designers of the Urge have married their love of cars with gaming by allowing the car’s

steering wheel and pedals to be used as game controls. Imagine: you could “maneuver through the streets of New York, park the car and fire up the Xbox 360, then virtually race through the same streets using the same steering wheel, gas pedal and break pedal – blurring fantasy and reality in a way that the automotive world has never before seen,” as Microsoft boasts in its press release.

One can only wonder what a driver might get into his mind after just clearing a few rounds of the game “Vice City,” where you get to run over pedestrians and

shoot drug dealers.

## Back in Black

The following list of colours appeared in the North American Auto Show brochure for children, which tells kids that the show is so important that even someone like SpongeBob SquarePants visits. We had a hard time finding the colour which would describe all the idiots on the road.

“What’s your favorite colour of car? Find it on the list, and see if you agree with what it says about you:

Silver: You are elegant, love things that look futuristic and cool.

White: You are very particular about the way things should be. You are always on time.

Red: You are speedy and high energy.

Light to Mid-Blue: You are cool, calm and quiet.

Dark Blue: People can believe you and count on you. You have confidence.

Beige/Light Brown: You have simple, basic tastes.

Black: You are strong, powerful, and elegant.

Gray: You are serious and practical.

Dark Green: People can trust you.

Bright Yellow-Green: You are stylish and lively.

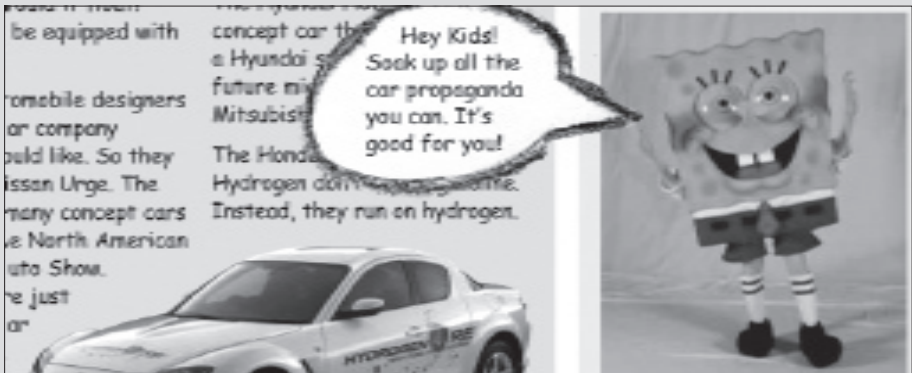
Yellow Gold: You are intelligent and warm.

Sunshine Yellow: You are cheerful.

Deep Brown: You are no-nonsense.

Orange: You are fun and love to talk.

Deep Purple: You are creative.”



## Why We Need a

### Gay Carfree Movement

“Gorgeous deserves your immediate attention.” Unless you’re gay, that is. Jaguar’s latest ad campaign with the “gorgeous” theme did want to go everywhere – including into gay and lesbian publications. That was too much for the American Family

Association. No homosexuals in British sports cars for these guardians of traditional values. And no gays or lesbians in Land Rovers, either. These big cars are for families, after all – you know, normal families. And the Ford Motor Company, owner of both brands, bowed to the threat of a boycott.

But the gay and lesbian movement fought back. Gay rights groups complained and held meetings with the automaker. Ford, fearing that it would lose money, changed direction.

In a letter sent to human rights organisations, Ford reiterated that it is committed to inclusion and that it's not as if it was against advertising in gay and lesbian publications or that it was more partial to "family values," but it's just that the company wants to be profitable – economically, that is. Ford prides itself on its "inclusion of different people with different perspectives."

The real kicker is that Ford has decided to run not only ads for Jaguar and Land Rover in gay and lesbian publications, but ads for all eight of Ford's vehicle brands.



Is this a victory?

Carbusters sees a marvelous but missed opportunity here. Gays and lesbians will now be subjected to an onslaught of corporate advertising next year. Where was the gay carfree movement saying that they would be more than happy to be discluded from Ford's inclusion policy? A firm gay and carfree support of the ban on advertising could have freed up advertising space for other forms of transportation like bikes and trailers.

As of press time, The Advocate's website was still flashing with Jaguar's "gorgeous" ad.

Grown and Sexy

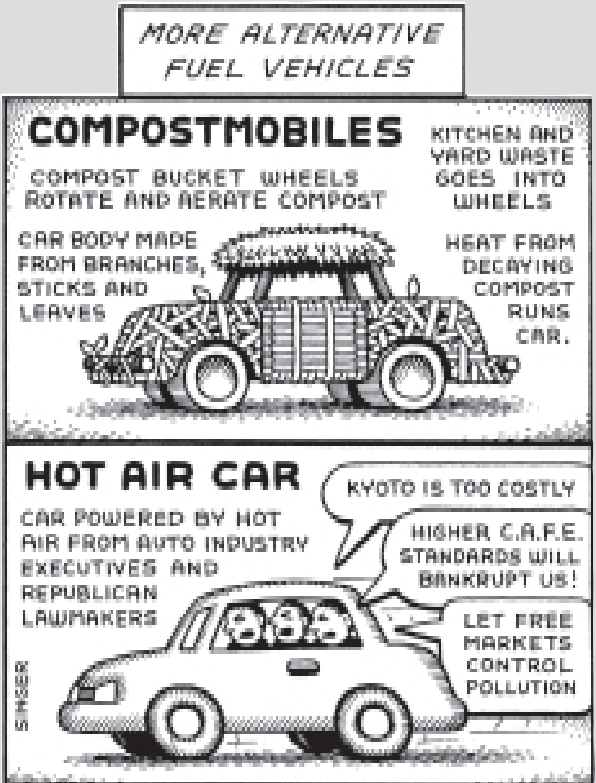
Marketing just seems to get more and more obvious these days as car companies try to target "niche" markets. Ford's Fusion is no exception.

At Grownandsexy.com, Ford is targeting a specific audience: "The concept of 'Grown and Sexy' is an urban African-American expression of the Fusion's ... marketing campaign 'Life in Drive,'" says the carmaker's official statement. "The themes behind 'Grown and Sexy' are all about breaking free from convention to enjoy life with style and attitude."

The Fusion's "Grown and Sexy" website would make even Michael Jackson black again.

NO EXIT

© Andy Singer



# world news



## Remembering the Victims

Ryan Carriere was cycling in Toronto when a van, making a right turn, struck him. He was dragged under the wheels and killed. He was a comic book artist who took his inspirations from the gardens of his urban neighbourhood. Carriere is one of thousands killed every day in traffic accidents.

November 3 marked the first official Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. Although the day has been commemorated since 1993, this year the United Nations passed a resolution internationally recognising the third Sunday in November as a remembrance day. The resolution encourages member states of the UN to make their roads safer.

Road Peace, a charity set up in 1992 to represent road crash victims and draw attention to victims' lack of rights before the law, first initiated this day to serve as public recognition of traffic crash victims. Because these accidents are of the "everyday" variety – 3,000 killed and 30,000 injured each day, world-wide – there are not the memorials or monuments that would normally accompany other disasters. Road Peace documents the

## Europe

### Tram Hypocrisy

Three "long-awaited" tram schemes in England have been scrapped due to rising costs, says the BBC. More specifically, the costs of the South Hampshire Rapid Transit had risen 26% since it was originally approved, while those of the Merseytram project had risen 40%. However, Road Block, a UK alliance against road building, points out that road projects are rarely given up on, even though they often go over budget. Re-search shows that trunk road schemes in England are averaging 53% over budget and local roads are running 40% over. Only one road building project was scrapped because of going over cost.

"The hypocrisy of the government on transport is breathtaking," says Road Block's Rebecca Lush. "Whilst withdrawing money for vital public transport schemes, they are allowing the cost of the bloated roads programme to rise and rise. Of course public transport schemes should not be delivered whatever the cost, but this same logic is not being applied to road schemes."

Although expensive to set up, tram and light rail proves economical in the long run. Research by Todd Litman of the Victorian Transport Policy Institute shows that when considering costs like building roads, parking, and external costs, rail transit is the most cost-effective.

**Death Threats, Hyundai-Style CZECH REPUBLIC** - The drive to make Central and Eastern Europe a new centre for automobile manufacturing continues, as Hyundai prepares to choose the Czech Republic as the site for a plant that would produce 300,000 cars annually. The government is salivating. It has set aside CZK 1.5 billion (EUR 52 million) for preparation of the site.

Given the intense competition for this plant among Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia, governments are willing to go to great lengths to lure car companies. Jiri Nezhyba of Environmental Law Service (ELS) says that although the details of incentives offered to Hyundai are still unknown, he says that they are likely to include 10 years operation tax-free and land for CZK 1 per m<sup>2</sup>. The government is offering Hyundai a total of CZK

## In Brief...

**JAPAN** - Mazda Japan is encouraging its employees to walk to work by offering them a financial incentive. The "Eco-walk" bonus will be given to employees who live more than two kilometres from work and make more than 15 round trips per month. The company does not plan to offer the programme outside of Japan.

- AP, December 13

**INDIA** - General Motors plans to triple production in India from the current levels of 25,000 cars per year, in order to meet growing demands in South Asia. This announcement came only weeks after the company said it would cut one-eighth of its US workforce.

- AP, December 13

**IRAQ** - During the recent elections in Iraq, the government declared a five-day holiday that included a traffic ban [not including bikes]. "In the northern city of Mosul," writes AP, "the streets were like a giant



## Asia/Pacific

3.5 billion (EUR 122 million) in investment incentives.

There are problems with the country's choice of land. In an open letter to the CEO of Hyundai, ELS notes that Novosice lies at the base of the Beskydy Mountains, a protected natural area. "The presence of an industrial plant and related traffic growth in its vicinity would lead to destru-ction of the natural characteristics of this area."

ELS asks Hyundai to honour its "Global Envi-ronmental Policy" which states that the company will "minimise the environmental impact [of all its] business activities" and "create a better environment for future generations."

Many people in the region protested the planned plant,

## The Americas

but everyone who lives on land that Hyundai plans to use for its plant has agreed to sell. The few households that at first refused to sell received death threats and decided to sell after all. Stanislav Vojkovský's farm had been family-run for six generations; he was one of the last to sell his land (also after being threatened). "Do you know what I am going to do when I get the money? I will immediately move away," he told the Respekt newspaper. "It is a dead village. Nosovice is finished."

A River Runs Under it

SOUTH KOREA - The congested mega-city of Seoul is combating the car's dominance and turning its energy towards pedestrians and cyclists. The dis-mantling of a six-lane highway and the

restoration of the river that ran beneath it is the highlight of this transformation [pictured above].

This two-year US\$350 million project was initiated by Seoul mayor Myung-Bak Lee.

The official opening of the river took place on October 1. There are 22 bridges across the stream – five for pedestrians and cyclists only. The traffic chaos that many thought would result has not occurred; on the contrary, the project has been so successful that three more over passes could be demolished next year, and ten in 2007.

Before this time, there was little development along the stream because of the pollution, noise and congestion from the elevated highway.

In the 1960s, the river had been buried by the expressway running straight through town.

## Middle East

USA - The San Joaquin Valley city of Fresno, California, has taken significant steps to cutting air pollution that results from sprawl. City officials assessed fees for travel to and from the homes, businesses and schools built on the edge of town. Developers will have to pay a fee if they build in the suburbs, as high as US\$781 per home until 2008; and as high as \$1,772 after that. Builders can install "air enhancing features" to reduce these fees. City officials say the rules, which apply only to new developments, could raise \$103 million over the next three

playground. Thousands of children took advantage of [the ban] to play games and turned major roads into soccer fields. Families strolled through residential neighbourhoods after voting."

- AP, December 15

USA - In an effort to humanise big-box retail, New Urbanist architects want to help redesign Wal-Marts in hurricane-damaged communities in Mississippi. One of the proposals is a Wal-Mart Village that would have apartments, condominiums and town houses surrounding the store. The streets and sidewalks would make access on foot much easier than usual at a Wal-Mart, and parking would be hidden behind the building.

- USA Today, November 14

CANADA - Chris Hardwicke, a Toronto architect, would like to build a bicycle highway made of concrete and glass tunnels suspended above city streets through which cyclists could travel to and from



# Action!



opposition to the project, which they say is unnecessary and environmentally dangerous. The mountains where the tunnel is to be excavated are known to contain significant deposits of asbestos and uranium and there has been mounting criticism from several quarters regarding the project's economic usefulness.

The International Herald Tribune quotes Vanda Bonardo of Legambiente, the largest environmental group in Italy: "This valley is already choked with infrastructure: a highway, a rail line, two state roads, not to mention a river, which floods regularly. It's a very delicate environment."

- Indymedia, December 9

## To School by Tank

On the day of the International Demonstrations on Climate Change (December 3), the 4x4info.be website was launched with the support of 15 Belgian organisations. The site and campaign is dedicated to questioning the growing number of SUVs in Belgium, where the general trend is towards bigger, faster and heavier cars. Combined with the SUV's horrible fuel emissions and shoddy safety record, 4x4info.be thought these were reasons enough for action.

The group started out by distributing stickers through fair-trade stores, ecological centres, and friends. They have attracted the attention of an SUV on-line forum, whose administrators invited the group to discuss its point of view.

In early January, together with 15 volunteers, 4x4info.be staged a protest at the European Motor Show in Brussels. Visitors to the show reacted positively, the press came, and national television and on many on-line newspapers picked up their message.

"The car industry can't use the promotion of biofuels as an alibi to keep them from reducing average fuel consumption," says Joeri Thijs, one of the coordinators of 4x4info.be.

On Dec. 7, near the village of Venaus in Pied-mont's Susa Valley, police attacked and forcibly evicted locals and activists who had been peacefully occupying the valley for a week in protest against plans to construct a high-speed train line and tunnel linking Turin with Lyon.

According to reports, more than ten people were injured and three arrested as police moved in with bulldozers, kicking and beating sleeping protesters and destroying barricades and hospitality structures erected during the occupation of the site where work is due to begin on the line.

The entire population of the Susa Valley have stated their

## Rally against National Urban Renewal Mission

In New Delhi on December 9, the National Alliance of People's Movements organised a mass rally against the Indian government's national urban programme (part of a US\$30-billion project covering some 60 cities over the next five years). Medha Patka, one of the leaders of the rally, says that the World Bank money for the project will not go towards public transport for the poor, towards shelter or for street vendors, but only developers, the upper class, political leaders, and capital



## High Speed Rail in Italy



# member Group profile

by Andrew Wheeldon

**A** bicycling city is emerging in Cape Town, South Africa. I say this because I believe that positive thought brings positive action. The Bicycle Empowering Network (BEN) has helped to promote the often tiny footsteps that are being made in this direction. We promote cycling as a form of commuting (in the past three years BEN has distributed some 1,600 used and 1,000 new commuter-style bicycles), provide bicycle maintenance and safety courses for kids, and act as a partner and contributor to the strategic planning process for Cape Town and the Western Cape. BEN also plans regular events to promote cycling, such as Bike to Work Days, car-free days, and school bike events.

When Louis de Waal and I founded BEN in February 2002 we had both been previously involved in bicycling advocacy and saw the need for a programme that would address bicycling as a form of transport. The main mission of BEN is to support poverty alleviation by offering low-cost non-motorised transport; another goal is to improve health by linking exercise and mobility.

In collaboration with donor agencies, BEN facilitates the import of donated bicycles to South Africa. These come from Belgium (VZW Feryn-Pijl), Germany (Ökologie Zentrum), Ireland (Bike Link), the Netherlands (Bikes for Africa), Switzerland (Ecos, Drahtesel), the UK (Re-cycle), and the United States (Pedals for Progress and Bikes not Bombs).

Also, together with the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, BEN has imported some 1,800 so-called "California Bikes" (sturdy commuter cycles) from China as a form of transport for South



The Western Cape provincial government purchased 100+ bikes for their rural

Africans.

Locally, BEN has set up bicycle workshop projects, distributes the donated bicycles to strategically selected recipients and through so-called "Independent Bike Dealers," and collaborates in the planning and introduction of bicycle paths and networks.

## Bicycle Refurbishment, Distribution and Training

All donated bicycles are delivered to BEN's central Academy where the bikes are stored, assembled and refurbished. A simple assembly takes half an hour, with a simple service requiring one hour. A full service can require two or more hours. Depending on spare parts, a complete rebuild may take three days.

At the same time, potential candidates for the Independent Bike Dealer project are trained in bicycle maintenance. The idea is for a new culture of bicycling to take root, and this requires a sufficient number of well-trained mechanics. Many of the bicycles are distributed to Independent Bike Dealers set up with support from BEN.

## Infrastructure Programs

The bike/pedestrian fatality rate in Cape Town is 20 per 100,000 residents – nine times higher than in New York

City and more than ten times that of London. At Cape Town rates, New York City would see 1,629 cyclists and pedestrians killed per annum, instead of 181.

BEN projects aimed at improving traffic safety for non-motorised participants include a separate cycle and pedestrian facility along the city's green belt that is nearing completion; cycle and pedestrian paths along major thoroughfares; a proposal for a central business district route; and several corridor projects.

Another interesting project is the Cape Town Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) Strategy, which calls for including NMT in planning. For example, 2010 World Cup venues are to include bicycle parking and lock-up facilities at stations and stadiums. BEN's partner in planning is Interface for Cycling Experience.

## Educational Campaign

In the spirit of the Cape Town NMT strategy, BEN has begun to establish an "ALLOW 1.5m" campaign – a simple message to be worn on the back of cycling shirts to inform motorists of the rights of cyclists to the left 1.5 metres of road space (in South Africa, people drive on the left). Beneath this is a further

# Out of the Car...

by Vincent Aronio

Many of us probably remember our trips to school like this: In the morning, we put on our brand new backpack and headed out the door. We walked with a sibling, a parent or a friend, and over the years we got to know every detail of our route. Or maybe we took the bus, where we shared a ride with our friends, talked about comic books or TV, or just looked out the window at the passing city.

Today, the image is more like this: Mom (sometimes Dad) bundles the child into the car seat, fastens the seatbelt, and off they go to school. Maybe Mom is on her way to work, and she's already nervous that she'll be late. At the school, a line of cars slowly snakes down the street, motors running, each stopping just long enough for a kid to jump out, kiss Mom goodbye, and dash into the schoolyard.

Every year, fewer and fewer children – especially in Europe and North America – walk or bike to school, and more and more of them are either driven or drive to school. As a result, during peak morning driving hours (around 9 am) in urban areas, 18% of the cars on the road are on their way to schools.

The consequences are more than just extra unnecessary traffic – it affects children's health, social skills and perhaps more importantly, their view of the world. Children have become permanently strapped into the seat of car dependence.

## Hamburger, Fries, and a Ford Sedan

Why are more and more children forsaking the age-old tradition of the school bus or the walk to school? The causes are complex and inter-related, but one reason is the rise in car ownership over the last 10 years. Many households now have two or more cars and parents who work, making it more likely that they will take their kids to school on the way to their jobs.

In addition, parents today often choose schools for their facilities or academic rigour, not because it is the school in the neighbourhood where they live. Bus services in sprawling cities are often inadequate and in many areas they are expensive and underfunded. In addition, increased levels of traffic, paradoxically caused by so many parents driving their children to school, make parents worry that the roads are not safe for their children if they walk or bike. Then there are fears for the children's personal safety; if they travel unaccompanied they may become victims of bullying or abduction. Finally, children are carrying ever more equipment and books to school and parents are finding themselves under increased time pressure.



Martina Neoralová, 7C, Zabreh na morave, Czech Republic

Children are becoming dependent on car  
Carbusters takes a look at the reasons as

In Great Britain in the last ten years, the proportion of journeys to school by car has nearly doubled from 16% to 30%, and the average length of the journey to school for secondary pupils has gone up by well over a third. Other countries have seen an even more drastic change in only one generation. A New Zealand study found that the dominant mode of travel to school for parents was walking (65%), while today 66% of their children are being driven to school.

Young people are continuing to demand greater independence and freedom, as they look to explore their neighbourhoods. This freedom to be able to play on neighbourhood streets independent of parental supervision is an important part of growing up.

Interactions with the environment are an important component in children's development. The mental maps they create allow them to find their way in the world. Car dependency leads to

# and into the Classroom



travel from an increasingly early age, well as the solutions to this global problem.

poor road safety and navigation skills, prevents children from learning independent mobility and only increases their car dependency.

The New Zealand study also asked what their preferred mode of travel was and how they actually got to school. While two thirds of children said they preferred “active” modes of travel, less than half travel to school in this way. Children rated cycling as the way they would most want to get to school, but only around 10% of children actually do so.

Ironically, most young people are aware of the negative effects of pollution and congestion and know about sustainable transport issues. In surveys, however, knowledge of sustainable transport issues was not necessarily reflected in attitudes or

behaviour.

Indeed, a recent study has shown that children’s travel behaviour follows that of their parents, and that their adult travel behaviour is determined by behaviour patterns set during childhood. The result is a generation of car-dependent children whose lifestyle is hopelessly linked to car travel.

On the other hand, Nick Ellis, Chair of the UK’s Local Authority School Travel Forum, (speaking in a personal capacity) says that young people see the disadvantages when they are pointed out. As oil prices steadily rise it becomes more important that children learn about alternatives. “As cars begin to disappear, or are reduced in number due to circumstances, the coming generation of children must be able to think about finding alternatives, and trying out those which are available now.”

However, Ellis acknowledges that “many young people do not see the full picture since they are being sold the lifestyle so heavily. How many millions are spent by the car industry on their products? And how much by the same companies (in fairness) is spent on road safety education, on pollution-cleaning, etc.?”

This lifestyle includes, of course, the desire to have a car as early as possible – the car as teenage status symbol. In his book *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser give one sad example of the consequences: “[M]ost of the kids take jobs after school in order to have a car ...[and] fewer participate in after-school sports and activities. They stay at their jobs late into the night, neglect their homework, and come to school exhausted.”

Advertising and the car industry are playing significant roles in educating children about the benefits of car culture. In fact, children have begun to influence the purchase of family cars, something the car industry has not been blind to. Honda, for instance, has produced a brochure aimed directly at kids. The point of the brochure is not only to keep the children busy while their parents test drive the car, but also to introduce them to the brand as future customers. “With brands becoming cool or boring for children at an early age, it’s important to talk to them on their level and allow them to form their own opinions,” says a Honda spokesman.

Right out of the womb, and infants are already in the clutches of the car industry. Mazda has sponsored a call for the five cutest babies made by *American Baby* magazine. These Mazda models appeared at “Babies R Us” stores throughout the US.

Car companies are looking to market cars to the whole family, making buying a car a lifestyle

“As cars begin to disappear or are reduced in number, the coming generation of children must be able to think about finding alternatives, and trying out those which are available now.”





## Learning to Read Cars

I grew up in a small village in the US Midwest where things were typically quiet and slow, with the exception of the particular street I lived on, which was the main motorised route through town.

I would fall asleep to the sound of semi-trailers passing by, their headlamps projecting rectangular bands of light around the walls of my bedroom.

We neighbourhood kids, bored, would lift our arms to pull imaginary cords to get the truck drivers to blow their horns. And we integrated them, and plain old cars as well, into our yard games.

One game – it didn't have a name – involved running up to the safety of the porch before the car or truck passed the house. A marker would be set: maybe a driveway a couple of houses down, or a large tree, and we would wait on the terrace (the strip of grass between sidewalk and curb) until a vehicle reached the marker. We would then bolt across the lawn and up the porch steps until we touched the front door of the house and were "safe."

Anyone who didn't make it was, by the rules of this game, run over. Dead. At least for a few rounds.

To gain status, one of us would wait around a little longer than the other players before taking off for the porch. This required that one was either a very fast runner or good at picking out the slower moving vehicles, the ones that might actually be going the speed limit as they passed by.

There was also an emergency "out," if, say, you realised you'd under-estimated the speed of the vehicle or just hadn't been paying attention. In such a case, you could throw yourself flat on the grass before the car passed, so that it would then pass over you without harm.

Despite all of this early practice, however, I find

approach that the whole family can take part in.

"There are more single-parent households and households with both parents working than ever before," says Jim Perry – senior vice-president of ad sales for Nickelodeon, a cable TV network offering children's programming – in *Automotive News*. "I believe that's why parents are spending more time with their kids when they're shopping for a vehicle. That is now considered quality family time."

Car companies have also begun to sponsor schools. Since 2000, Toyota has been the primary sponsor of the "Green Pack" produced by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe. According to Toyota, the resource kit for teachers, which includes tests and lesson plans, is distributed in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Its contents are also on-line. Toyota's role in the project is clear. The section on transportation even touts Toyota's own technology, a catalyser for diesel vehicles. Although the publication points out many of the negative effects of transport, it does little to question the dominance of personal transport. In the introduction to one of the lesson plans on transport, entitled "People and Automobiles," the authors write, "Personal mobility for work, study and leisure is considered an essential facet of modern life."

In this way, they can improve their image and, more importantly, become a part of children's lives at an early stage and so shape their future travel choices.

The increased use of the car by children



# Education Through

by Annie Rudnik

**M**y first Critical Mass bike ride took place in Chicago. It was in August and the bike riders were out in full force, ending summer with a bang. Daley Plaza swarmed with sweaty, dirty bicycles and their owners. The place reeked with excitement and energy. I was thrilled to finally take part in the activist tradition. I felt rebellious and worried that some police intervention, upset drivers, or violence would accompany this rebellion. Fortunately, from the time we hit the streets to the time we dispersed three hours later, little aggressive interaction had occurred. In fact, I was completely surprised and inspired by the freedom I felt, the art I saw, the community it created, and the fun I had.

As I weaved through the other bike riders, I was amused by all of the different clothes, costumes, decorations, and designs. I saw tall bikes and tandem bikes, bikes with fur, streamers, glitter, and paint. The Rat Patrol was out in full force, showing off their latest dumpster-dived bicycle creations. Riders themselves matched their imaginative forms of transportation. One person donned a clown nose. Another's helmet resembled a disco ball. A group of people were dressed in burlap, wielded plastic horns and cardboard weapons, and called themselves "Biking Vikings." One man decked out his bike with a mixing table and speakers, giving cyclists a beat to bike to. Thanks to a friend's suggestion,

I wore a fake mustache. As we rode through the night, our creative differences provided us with a constant conversation starter. With music, costumes, and dialogue, the mass became a party. The event was magical.

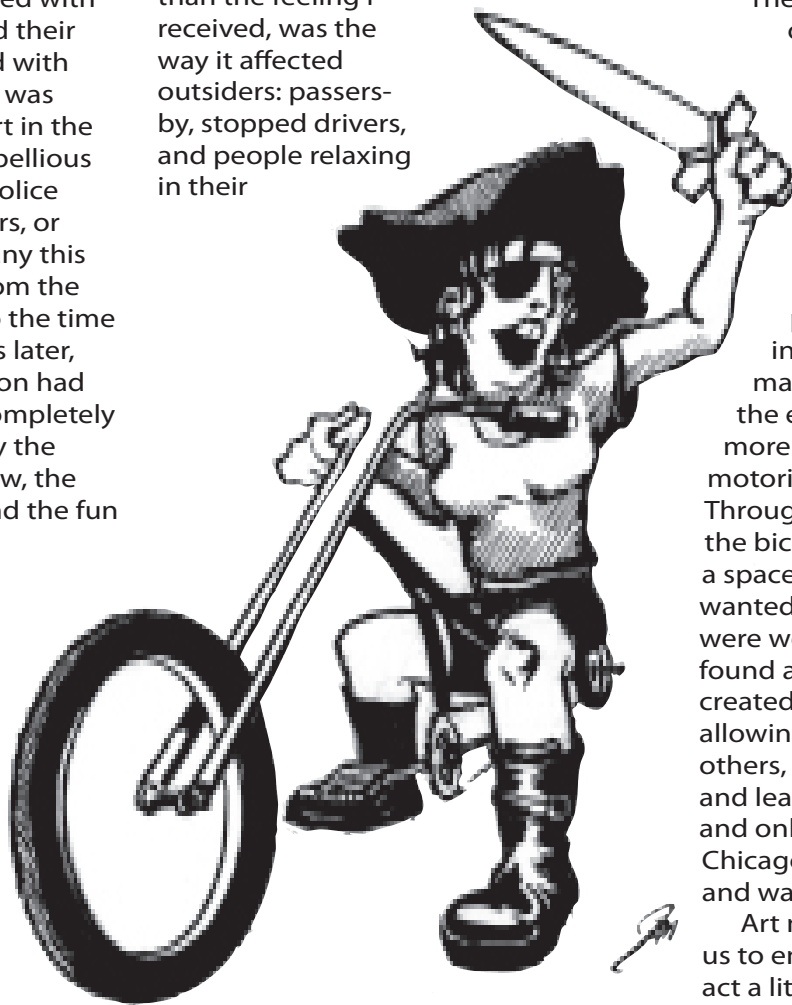
What was more exciting than the feeling I received, was the way it affected outsiders: passers-by, stopped drivers, and people relaxing in their

cheering on this strange parade. While some drivers were still upset by their delay, the majority enjoyed the front row seats. Some drivers stuck their hands out of their windows to "high-five" the bike riders and support the celebration.

The joy that decorated our bikes and bodies seemed contagious. In fact, several times young kids ran to get their bikes as soon as they saw our parade, and they physically joined in the festivities. Our mass grew through the engagement of more bike riders, paused motorists, and passers-by. Through art and absurdity, the bicyclists had created a space which outsiders wanted to join. Also, they were welcomed once they found a place in the mass. It created an open community allowing people to meet others, exchange ideas, and learn. This was the first and only time I have seen Chicago so completely open and warm, and alive.

Art not only allowed us to enjoy ourselves, act a little silly and lighten the mood, but sparked the viewers' and outsiders' curiosity, enticing and encouraging them to participate.

Creating an air of joy is important in every activist movement. The act of celebration, through artistic and creative expression, allows participants to enjoy their struggle and encourages them to continue. It helps to create community which makes the work social and sustainable. It also helps to spark interest in outsiders. Curiosity can provoke a person to learn more



apartments. Many people on the streets stopped, waved, laughed, and wished us a "Happy Friday!" I noticed some asking others, "Why the celebration?" As the bike riders received energy from the on-lookers, they responded with even more excitement and enthusiasm. The noise created by our laughter and chants was loud enough to entice people to watch from their windows. Up and down apartment buildings, people hung out of their windows

# Taking School into the



Ziaur Rahman Litu

by Debra Efroymsen and Ziaur Rahman Litu

For four hours a week, one section of a residential street in Dhanmondi comes to life with the shouts of playing children. Boys and girls, age five and up, are on bicycles – a few with training wheels, most without. Some of the children are in uniform: a crimson shirt with navy blue track pants. They are the official helpers, themselves aged only 12-15. With authority, they move around the bicycles and clusters of children, ensuring that everyone gets a chance to ride, helping young children learn, and checking that the bikes are in good condition. A sturdy 14-year-old circulates with a pump and tools, fixing the bicycles when they fall into disrepair. Various adults from the neighbourhood also gather, mothers to watch their children with anxiety and pride, father and brothers to help out, or just to enjoy the evident pleasure of the children.

In Bangladesh, as in many Asian countries, aspirations that several years ago simply hadn't materialised are now common. Children dream of owning a car, or at least a motorcycle, when they

get older. Fuel dependency is the norm and, fuel-free transport is the exception and something to be discouraged. Children are likely influenced by their parents' distaste for "old-fashioned" travel by foot, bicycle, and rickshaw, and by the eagerness to be modern, without an understanding of the many disadvantages such modernity entails.

How current children in Dhaka, in particular, view transport depends to a large extent on class – that is, wealth. For the minority elite – few in numbers but dominant in their effect on the city – transport means a car, or even an SUV. Other forms of transport (walking and cycling) are absurd, or, like rickshaws, viewed as downright harmful.

## Why Aren't Bicycles Prestigious?

For middle- and upper-class children, the streets are dangerous places only to be navigated in the company of an adult, and recreation is spent almost exclusively in front of a TV or computer. Research conducted by WBB Trust among 1,056 school children found that 67% did not have a playground near their home, and 48% said that TV viewing is their favourite leisure activity. Shockingly, a full 64%

In Bangladesh, children learn that there is more to the city than what they see from behind a windshield.

of children report that they have no recreational period in school; less than 3% have recreation daily, and 29% have a recreational period only once a week. When asked where they play (more than one answer was recorded), 37% replied at home, 17% near home, 11% on a school field, and only 6% on a road in front their home. A full 29% replied they do not play. For these children, streets are dangerous places, with the threat of traffic accidents as well as assault or kidnapping by strangers or evil neighbours.

Many parents drive their children across the city to enroll them in a more prestigious school. It may even be a form of prestige to brag about how far one drives one's children to school, oblivious to the harm to children of being stuck in cars, subjected to constant honking, for two or more hours a day.

Such children grow up without any knowledge of their neighbourhood, basic self-confidence or street skills, or normal physical or mental development; many are overweight, even diabetic, and lack the ability to socialise with others. As for transport, while the rich know they will have a car when they get older, the middle class can only dream of owning one – or, if not a car, a motorbike.

For the poor, the situation is entirely different. The poor cannot afford to coddle their children the way the rich do; often both parents must work outside the home, and the children are to a large extent on their own. However deplorable this may be in other ways (and we by no means wish to suggest that the lives of poor children in Dhaka are enviable) lower-class children do gain one significant advantage over their wealthier peers: they are independent, street-smart, and capable. For them, the streets are both a playground and a

source of income.

Children frequently weave between cars begging or selling small items; they chase each other on the footpaths (sidewalks) and into the streets; they even

“

Children are influenced by their parents' distaste for 'old-fashioned' travel by foot, bicycle, and rickshaw, and by the eagerness to be modern, without an understanding of the disadvantages such

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pedal rickshaws or vans. If they go to school, they get there on foot, and in their free time from school and work, they make the streets and footpaths their playground. In the process, ironically, they may perceive the city as far safer than the children who only view the streets from the windows of a car or the seat of a rickshaw, with a guardian sheltering them from life beyond their vehicle's wheels.

### Riding Free for the First Time

Always believing that there is hope for change, we are carrying out various programmes to change the situation, and to try to instill some of the confidence and street smarts – and more pro-city

dreams – into middle- and upper-class children. Roads for People, an alliance of which WBB Trust is the secretariat, offers free cycle classes on a residential street twice a week, and other Roads for People members are beginning similar initiatives.

The mother of a very overweight boy watches with concern as he struggles to learn, unable to gain his balance due to his unwieldy body. “I know he needs to lose weight, but where can he play,” she explains. “At home he's always in front of the TV.”

As her son gains confidence and slowly begins to gain balance, she herself gets onto a bicycle, riding for the first time in years. Though she falls several times and rips her salwar, she is laughing with joy. Soon she sails past her son, shouting to him, “Look at your mother!”







A 10-year-old girl is riding for the first time, and slowly gains confidence, only to crash into the footpath and fall over. Her mother runs anxiously over, and someone pulls out a bottle of Savlon (antiseptic). The girl grins, waving everyone away, and gets right back onto the bicycle. Some parents may never have seen this aspect of their children, or perhaps only on a visit to the countryside, where their children run eagerly, climb trees, and forget to whimper or complain over minor pains.

Another mother tells us that her daughter is usually silent, and never mixes with others. But when she saw that children are riding on the street, she suddenly became excited and begged her mother to take her to the class. This child, reluctant to talk to others, who has no friends, suddenly is struggling with persistence to learn, and euphoria breaks across her face as she pedals away from her trainer and rides free for the first time.

Advantages for participants include not only the chance to learn to ride a bike, or to practice the skill, or to enjoy outdoor play, but the confidence of the child helpers in carrying out their job, and the opportunity for rich and poor to mix in a safe setting. For guardians and the others who congregate on the footpaths, this is an opportunity to watch others, laugh at the spectacle of grown men stumbling as they learn, and admire the children's pleasure.

Children need play spaces, not just in the home but outdoors, where they can move about freely and mix with other children. Relying on playgrounds and fields in the crowded city of Dhaka is no solution. If children are to have any hope of a happy childhood, with full opportunities for development, then we have to turn some of our quieter streets into playgrounds, at least a few hours a week, so once



The greatest obstacle tends to be the attitude of the parents, who fear their children will be hit by cars, and do not encourage their kids to walk or bike, even though the benefits are significant. One often-overlooked outcome to teaching kids to walk and bike safely is that once they've learned these skills, they become the most effective examples to their parents and all road users in their communities.

In 1970, 90% of kids in America who lived within one mile of school walked, and within two miles biked to school. Today that number is 33%. While this percentage continues to drop nationwide, the Oregon Safe Routes to School programme hopes to reverse that trend and increase the number of kids walking and biking to school back up to 60% statewide by 2012.

Since the fall of 2004, I've had the exciting opportunity to work for the Bicycle Transportation Alliance teaching the educational component of Oregon's Safe Routes to School programme. Along with seven other instructors statewide, I teach a ten-hour bike safety programme to fourth-graders and a two-hour pedestrian safety class to second-graders in Portland public schools. Both programmes include classroom instruction, but most of the time students spend practicing skills out in the neighbourhoods. Kids learn to identify hazards, locate the best places to cross streets, and how to handle their bikes while observing the rules of the road. The skills they learn are empowering, but every bit as valuable is that they gain the confidence of their parents, who are now happier to allow their kids to venture out.

## Teaching Kids to Ride in Portland

**W**hile educating motorists in America about their responsibility to share the road can be challenging, convincing any adult to use a bike or their own two feet for transportation remains even more difficult. In contrast, children are eager to learn these skills.

# want to

Dear Anna,  
As a UK high school teacher, I am worried about my students' love for their cars. Even my colleagues cannot help but talk about driving all the time. Do you have any advice for how we can educate the public about the alternatives?  
Signed,  
Out of Ideas

Dear Out,  
Modal shift education aims to persuade people to drive less. Managing demand through "Intelligent Travel" works on hearts and minds rather than on physical changes such as altered road layout or transport services. Education is very cost effective, but drive-less messages are under-funded compared to lavish advertising from car companies.

There is hope. Around half of Scottish drivers want to cut their car use according to Prof. Steve Stradling, psychologist at the Transport Research Institute, Napier University, Edinburgh. In "Public Perceptions of Travel Awareness 2005," he classifies four driver groups:

- 1) Die hard drivers;
- 2) Complacent motorists less attached to motoring, but who see no reason to change;
- 3) Malcontent motorists who find driving stressful and want to cut their car use, but can't see how, particularly in rural areas;
- 4) Aspiring environmentalists who actively try to cut their car use.

Though targeting die hard drivers won't work, travel education might make complacent and malcontent motorists try harder!

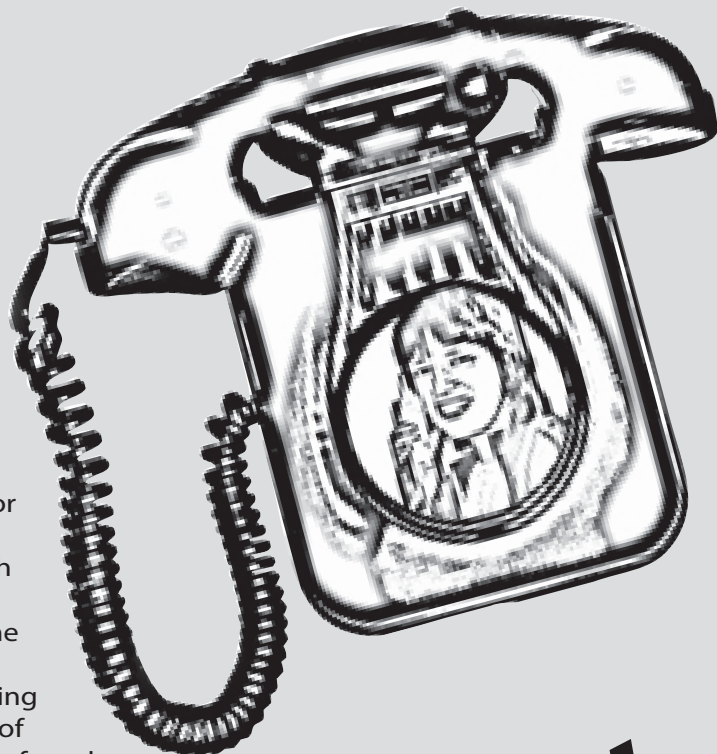
There is a fifth group of aspiring motorists, generally teenagers. A review of published

re-search by students of Ian Roberts, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, including a large US study of 17,000 teenagers, found that those who received the most driver education had higher crash rates than those who received none. If you tell children about driving they will start sooner, go out on the roads more and crash more.

"Making Campaigning for Smarter Choices Work, 2005" by Transport & Travel Research Ltd and the Transport Studies Group at the University of Westminster points out that changed awareness and attitudes precede behavioural change. This list might be of help to educators:

1. Awareness of car-related problems
2. Accepting responsibility
3. Realising that there are alternatives
4. Evaluating alternatives to solo car travel
5. Making a choice to modify behaviour
6. Trying out new choices
7. Adopting a sustainable alternative

Cost effective interventions target the right driver group and level of thinking. The fourth stage of finding a viable alternative to single car occupancy is crucial. This is where personalised travel planning is invaluable. An expert clarifies choices, for instance, for each commuter by providing not just the public transport number and route, but also the times and



# just call

prices on both outward and a choice of return journeys.

Sometimes helping drivers find a lift share partner or learn about altered working hours is required as many drivers are not awake to change or too busy or lazy to investigate it seriously. Education aims to make it easier for malcontented drivers to change.

There is also a right time in terms of life events. When people move home, change jobs or start a new school or university they are ripe for transport messages. The birth of a first baby is also when traffic reduction education might be effective. Many new parents are tempted to buy a car when they have a child.

Successful educational methods for relocators or new starters are site-specific guides and lift share matching. I authored the University of York's travel guide which included 11 modes: walking, cycling, bus, train, taxi, minibus, car share,

# Reds vs. Greens

Ingrid Hanušová



by Chris Coleman

He glared at the approaching yellow light, finally releasing the accelerator at the last second to apply the brakes. He would have zoomed through the light but the cars before him sealed his fate. Beads of sweat were caught in his eyebrows, for this was greater Phoenix, Arizona in May. That meant temperatures in the lower nineties Fahrenheit even at five o'clock rush hour. He quietly cursed himself as he brought his car to a stop. The Bell Road and 75<sup>th</sup> crossing meant a solid three-minute wait to let the hundreds pass east and west. Though it seems trivial, it's enough for some to risk their lives by "running reds." To Martin and others it meant three less minutes before the glow of the television and the hum of the air conditioner.

Martin found the standstill disorienting, unnatural even, after driving the free flow of Interstate 10 for forty minutes from his office job in the neighbouring suburb of Scottsdale. These eight lane highways built as straight as Billy Graham make driving as easy as possible. Leaving the realm of cruise control for the stop-and-go of city streets was maddening.

Behind him and to the right stood the largest mall in Glendale. While before him, to the left and right, spread a multitude of big box commercial centres. These monsters of commerce rest behind 100 metres of parking lots. Standard sit-down restaurant chains and plenty of fast food joints

interrupted the sea of black. Massive store signs of non-ironic pop art littered the sky to complete the scene.

Ninety seconds passed to no event. The scenery was offering no entertainment so Martin turned on his radio. The tape deck had died months ago, so he was left with only the tasteless radio. The dial was on the five-minute news highlighting the traffic: "...is mild on the 17, and thirty-minute delays on the I-10 approaching Apache Junction. From the helicopter it seems to be a flipped over R.V." He quickly flipped the dial.

"Come to the Bull Auto Palace today! The best prices in the Valley guaranteed! No credit...?" the voice barreled as deeply as a god.

He turned the dial. "I've got a fever of 103. Hey baby you can do more than dance."

Finally, he turned it off knowing it wasn't worth his bother. But he did so in a rush, not wanting to hold up traffic if the light turned green during his distraction. He glanced at the lady in the car idling to his right. Janet was in her late 30s, with immaculately held-up brown hair and wearing a beige dress. She furtively glanced back, but the eye contact ended as soon as it began. Neither could have cared less about each other.

Soon a hundred fifty seconds had passed. Martin could do nothing more than stare at the round beacons above, his only hope to escape this rising tide of autos. A hubcap spun off an approaching car at an incredible whirl, hit the elevated median and jumped up, up and over the car in front of Martin before loudly denting the trunk of an old two-door Hyundai. The driver didn't seem to care. A proud and loud Hummer H2 whizzed by, fully coated in a waving US flag design with a mean bald eagle on its hood. Certainly that driver was aware that this is a nation at war.

Two hundred fifty seconds: something wasn't quite right. Seeking confirmation he turned to his left to find a big burly guy raging. He was pounding his fists on the dashboard and throwing insults through his open window. Curious, Martin manually opened his front-left window. The man immediately vented through his '01 GMC Suburban, "What is this, the light from hell?"

Mr. GMC Suburban was maybe 40, with a heavy but sturdy frame, prominent jaw and a buzz cut. In spite of the heat, he wore an unzipped leather jacket. His right hand tightly gripped the automatic gear stick. Martin just nodded his head politely.

After seeing his acknowledgement he huffed, "Lights are never this long. Something is definitely wrong. It's been like five minutes and I have a grill to light. You have a cell phone?"

"No." Martin was surprised he didn't have one himself.



## What do you do when the light doesn't change?

Is this police material? Raising his voice, he asked, "Who would you call?"

"Who else, the police." Their heads turned slightly to the opposing direction, both wishing this dialogue would end.

"A funny little predicament we find ourselves in now," Martin thought. Staring at the light hoping for it to change was a bit like waiting for God to acknowledge himself. He had no one waiting for him in his studio apartment, and no plans for the evening save microwaving some dinner and unwinding his tightly strung head from a long day of pushing paper invoices under the weight of halogen lights and white walls. He liked to turn his recliner 180 degrees and gaze at the reflection of the muted TV on the wall and guess what show was on as he flipped through the channels. This was about all he could muster midway through a workweek. He didn't mind the wait.

On his right, Janet opened her window to share her frustration. "This light is eternal. Shouldn't something be done?" she cried.

Suburban, assuming the words were addressed to him, mocked the authority of the light by walking out of his auto towards her Expedition. Sparing formalities they got straight to the business of how to use that mobile phone of hers. She had the phone number of the local police station.

Suburban replied, "Let me talk. I'm not one to take bullshit from those lazy donuts."

"But they'd be more sympathetic to a lady's voice," she forcefully replied as she dialed the number. Martin, intrigued, opened his door and walked over to her hood.

"Hello, there is a problem on 75<sup>th</sup> and Bell. The lights won't turn green... about five, six minutes... can't you bring a policeman to control the traffic and a technician to fix the light? ... Five more minutes?! But, but..."



Ingrid Hanušová

//

'Listen to me!' he roared as he crept closer to the flowing right lane. He teased a few cars as a matador does his bull. Then lost in the moment, he stepped in once more, this time inches from //

Mr. Suburban grabbed the phone from her and grunted, "Listen here ma'am, err sir. People and their cars are dying in this heat, all because a wire shorted somewhere." Click. "Can you believe that? Its good to know our police are hard at work."

Janet explained, "He said to call back in five minutes, so he's sure we're not exaggerating how long the light is. It's happened before. What we need is some patience and humor about all this."

"I'm sick of both," replied Suburban, leaning against Janet's Expedition with his forearm. Suddenly he jolted back, his eyes lit up. "Someone's gotta do somethin'. I've got some flare lights in the back of my ride. I'll stop the traffic myself long enough to get our side going." You could say he was born to lead. With a start he walked back to his SUV.

"You'll what?!" Janet exclaimed, but he ignored her.

Martin implored, "What happens after our side gets going?"

"Then we're closer to home," he replied resolutely as he walked to the rear of his vehicle. A few seconds later he closed the rear door with two flare sticks in one hand and matches in the other. He walked forward to the intersection, his intentions clear.

"You're not going to try to stop that traffic are you?" Martin challenged, standing in his path.

"It's gotta be somebody," he huffed, bumping Martin's weak frame as he proceeded with a grin of disdain. Martin turned around in amazement. The drivers would think he was crazy.

Was it selfish rage or goodwill for all going north and south that drove Suburban? Martin and Janet had no idea, but they knew he was beyond reason. So they walked up to the elevated median to better assess the situation. "What will they think you're doing?" asked Janet.

"That will be obvious" Suburban said quickly, with his eyes fixed upon the traffic going a steady 45 mph. He stood just a few feet from the right-lane-traffic racing by as he motioned his arms up and down carrying the red flames whose light was dwarfed by the powerful sun. Martin and Janet sheepishly looked on from a safe distance. Suburban seemed to be getting such a rush from the gusts of wind trailing from each car, like a wind turbine





# Up in Flames

n Why were cars the favourite target in the recent Paris uprisings?

by Steven Logan

To empty the streets, it is enough to promise everyone a highway.

- Paul Virilio

**A**lthough cars monopolise our streets and public spaces, once inside them, they are profoundly private and protected spaces that insulate us from the sounds and dangers of the outside world.

The car crash, an all too common occurrence, violently thrusts the car back into the public eye. It no longer simply takes up space on the street, but takes up lives and fills newspaper columns, local news, and obituaries.

The same might be said of the simple, but spectacular destructive act of lighting a car on fire. A row of parked cars on a city street is so familiar that we often forget about its presence. But a parked car in flames is not an object that is easily ignored.

In France, 7,000 vehicles were burned between October 27 and November 11, 2005. In a single night, 1,173 cars went up

in flames.

It began when two youths were trying to get home and elude police hassles on their way. They didn't manage to avoid the police, however, and they were chased up until the point they hid in an electric transformer. Moments later, they were electrocuted. The climate of fear and security that the police fostered propelled them to hide in such a dangerous place. Their deaths sparked the riots and the wave of car burning.

Perhaps you secretly cheered as the Paris youth set fire to cars in such astonishing numbers. We are carbusters after all. (At the rate that they were going, it would have taken them 175 years to burn all 28 million cars in the country.)

It might be as simple as the kebab shop owner in Aulnay-sous-Bois said in *The Guardian*: "Burning cars and dodging cops is a lot more fun than playing video games."

But maybe it is not so simple. As the supreme magical object of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the car has come to embody ideas of freedom, security, and even revolution. But, it also represents the bankruptcy

of these terms. Freedom for whom? Who is secure? And who can revolt?

Still, in all of the news coverage, which itself was filled with pictures of cars in flames, not with the angry faces of Paris' youth, there was little mention of why cars. In only one instance, in the *New York Times*, did I find a lengthy article on the subject of car burning. Here it was mentioned that car burning in France is something of a tradition. "Burning cars is rather typically French," says sociologist Michel Wieviorka in the article. "The last two weeks have been unusual, but it is more common than people realise."

In the 1970s in suburbs of Lyon, writes Wieviorka in "Violence in France," young people would steal a BMW, bring it back to their neighbourhood, and drive as fast as possible for all to see. Then, they would burn the car and disappear.

On an average day, 80 cars are burned around the country, more on New Year's Eve, when it has also become a tradition.

Theory in the Hot Seat

If we take a brief foray into French leftist theory we slowly begin to understand why, when a car goes up in smoke, it is the myth which ignites the flames and keeps them burning.

Writing in the 1950s, Roland Barthes wrote that automobiles, in this case a new Citroën model, are “consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object.”

The car becomes valued more for its symbolic qualities than anything else. Part of the system of “automobility,” writes John Urry, is that the car is both the “quintessential manufactured object” and one of the major items of personal consumption. Eras of economic and industrial production are called Fordism and post-Fordism. Henry Ford’s assembly line was part of a new way of working and living, and the post-Fordist time we are supposedly living through now is intimately linked with the riots in France. The unrest in France, writes Wieviorka, can be traced to the end of classical Fordist industries and the beginning of more job insecurity.

Since the 1960s and ’70s, French leftist thinkers have held a particular antipathy towards the car, writes David Inglis in “Auto Couture,” seeing it as a “potent symbol of the destructive effects of state-led modernisation processes.”

In 1971, Alain Touraine wrote

that the car is the ultimate symbol of a “programmed society” and “a social order dominated by the twin factors of a technocratic state and an all-encompassing consumerism.”

Since the car is linked to this kind of industrialisation and job security, it has been, ever since Ford’s assembly line, almost a necessity in any household. To own one means to have security, speed, safety, freedom and career success.

Skim through any number of advertisements for cars or listen to how people talk about their dreams of owning a car, and one sees how the car drives our ideas about what the good life means and how to achieve it.

This is what makes them magical objects.

For youth who are socially excluded – unemployed and living on the periphery – burning a car is a way of attacking an unjust system, a system that does not allow them to move freely or easily access the national ideals of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*.

### It is Just an Object

Interestingly, a spokesperson for PSA Peugeot Citroën, whose cars were the primary targets, said that the violence in Paris “is a complicated social issue. The car is merely an object.”

Merely? One can read this in two ways. Clearly, what she intended to say was that the

“  
For youth who are  
socially excluded  
– unemployed  
and living on the  
periphery – burning  
a car is a way of  
attacking an unjust”

violence is not about the cars, but about a complex of issues. But, one cannot help agreeing that, yes, the car is indeed an object, perhaps with a capital “O.” That is just the point. It is an Object which we have loaded with meaning over the past 100 years so that the car itself is the complicated social issue.

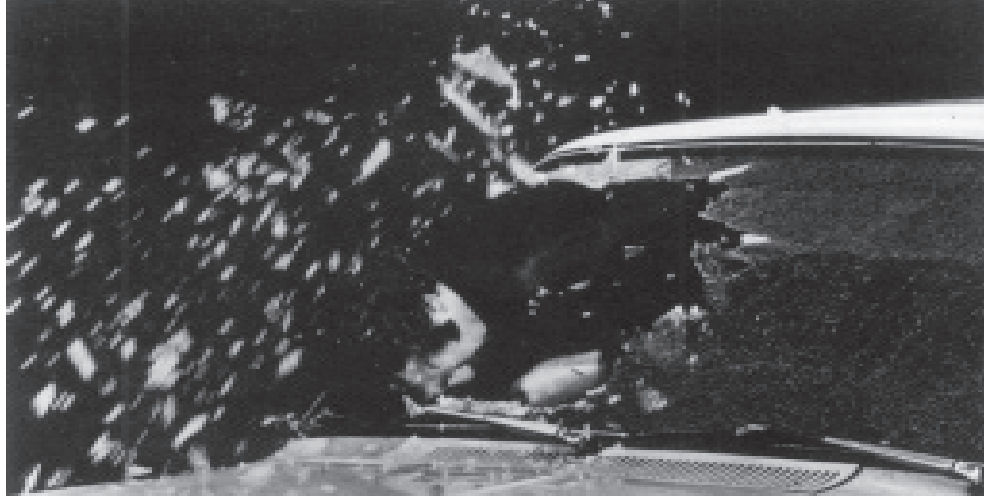
As much as the riots were about social exclusion, they were also about mobility exclusion. In theory we all have the freedom to move about, but in practice, particularly in the post-9/11 security society, mobility is limited to a privileged few in the world.

“Of all the complaints made by the youth of this country in revolt,” writes philosopher Alain Badiou in *Le Monde*, “this omnipresent checking/questioning and the interruptions of their normal lives, this endless harassment, is the most constant and the most widely shared.”

It was police harassment that the two boys, who were electrified in the power station, were escaping on the night that brought on the riots.

The automobile is also for many a symbol of this freedom to move. It represents (the illusion of) personal freedom to go where one wants, at any time, free from the surveillance of authorities. When we travel by metro, for example, we must adjust our life to the public transport’s schedule and subject ourselves to any number of security cameras and measures. Even being stuck in traffic does not curtail this freedom because at least the driver is behind the wheel of the





# Top 10 Myths About the Carfree Movement, Part I

In A long-time carfree activist shatters the outsider's view of what we stand for

by Randy Ghent

**O**ften, when people hear the word carfree, all kinds of ideas come to their minds, not all of them accurate or fair. This two-part article attempts to address those misconceptions.

**Myth 10: It's All About Sustainable Transportation**  
"I'm not so interested in transportation actually. The topic's always kind of bored me."

Many people, when introduced to the carfree issue, might often see it as a theme neatly contained within the broader field of transportation. However, what the movement seeks to do could better be described as minimising the role of transportation in society and replacing it with interaction, exchanging mobility for proximity.

That is, we would like to have less obligatory transportation and more time and space freed up for the exchange of information, ideas, goods, services, skills, experience and culture. Human settlements were built to enable these types of exchange, and their urban form reflected this priority until recent history. Streets were not race tracks (what we call "busy streets") or boring dead zones

("quiet streets"), but places to talk and play, buy and sell, laugh and cry.

Walk out the front door of your home and imagine the streetscape as you'd want it if you had to spend the rest of your life in that very spot. Would it be a stream of vehicular traffic or a lively people-oriented space with lots to see and do?

Successful communication of this message (a focus on quality of life issues) could result in much greater public participation in the carfree movement. Being "carfree" is for everyone – men, women, and children. This would represent a shift from technical discussions of "modal shift" to practical, creative matters of how we want our road space to look and what we want it to be used for.

In describing this movement, the adjective "sustainable" is often placed in front of the word "transport" or "transportation." But the crux of the issue is not so much what can be sustained, as what should be sustained. After all, some practices that can be sustained shouldn't be. Torture, war, greed... While we could argue about whether mass automobile use can be sustained (and for how long), the carfree movement above all believes that it's not desirable, and should not be sustained.

**Myth 9: There's Only the Here and Now**

"I tried to get around without a car, but gave up after a while. It was too hard; my effort was an utter failure." ...or... "You just want everyone to give up their cars!"

It can be expected that, where the automobile is the dominant mode of transport, it will also be the most practical, convenient option. The so-called "alternatives" will be just that – options outside the mainstream, lagging behind in practicality and convenience.

The idea is not to struggle against the stream of how most people "choose" to get around, since they're not given much of a choice. The car-based urban form and the allocation of street space can almost dictate how people today travel, and the behavior of a conscientious minority does not necessarily alter the situation much.

The idea, rather, is to transform our towns and cities into carfree places that will emphasise social interaction, and are built to function well with a combination of walking, cycling and public transport. Solutions exist to efficiently replace every existing function of the private automobile, but they will only be

implemented if the car vacates those niches in the transport system.

Whether people drive today in our car-oriented context is not of major importance. Whether they lend their political support to the above vision is.

Rather than suggesting that people just stop using their cars overnight, the carfree movement believes we must first create human habitats that not just support but embrace carfree living. Only then can it rise from an alternative minority life-style to a normal mainstream fact of life. At that point people will be offered a real choice of where they want to live a carfree neighbourhood or a car-dominated neighbourhood. They will be able to inspect and judge the two side by side.

We will no longer be required to make every-where look like a compromise between Venice and Detroit. Our collective imagination will be given the task of transforming the urban landscape to create places truly worth living.

**Myth 8: Carfree is a Strictly Urban Phenomenon**  
“It’s not practical to live without a car in truly rural areas.”

Actually, the vast majority of the world’s rural population lives carfree. Rural settlement patterns can either favour car dependence or not, just as in cities.

For many people, the word “rural” conjures up images of the American West, the settlement pattern of extreme spatial isolation as the population of the United States spread westward. Unlike the community-minded clusters of New England villages, the West was surveyed into neat squares called “townships” (36 square miles), further divided into “sections” (1 square mile, or 640 acres); the typical farm was 80 to 320 acres, being one-eighth to one-half of a square mile, with few if any neighbours in sight.

Unlike rural people in most of

the rest of the world, at the turn of the last century, the average American farming family lived on an isolated farmstead far removed from town and often from their neighbours on a property of less than one-quarter of a square mile. The isolation could only be overcome by access to private transport and the faster the transport, the less extreme the family’s isolation.

Today in Pakistan, by comparison, two-thirds of the rural population lives in dense villages or hamlets (i.e., in compact groups of dwellings). Unlike in America, dispersed habitation patterns are rare, found only in a few mountain regions.

This is the typical settlement pattern we see worldwide, and it is one that today can maintain its independence from cars unless that way of life is overcome by the automobile’s arrival.

Yes, it may be that the two transport systems cannot peacefully coexist; in many places the viability to live carfree in rural areas has been compromised by the arrival of the car-based system. It may become difficult or impossible to live carfree in those places.

Conversely, if the car-based system is replaced, locally or worldwide, then the carfree alternatives will suddenly reappear and regain their viability. We cannot say that it is inherently impractical to live carfree in the countryside. [Ed: We looked at the issue of carfree rural life, including first-person reports, in Carbusters #23.]

**Myth 7: The Goal Should Be a Balance Among Transport**

**Modes**  
“‘Carfree’ is fine in some applications, but the important thing overall is to achieve a healthy balance between pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and motor traffic.”

Since nearly everyone in the transportation reform movement proposes some variation on the theme of “balance,” it is natural to either assume that the carfree movement supports this too or to dismiss “carfree” as provocative posturing.

Proponents of balance might suggest that the modal split should ideally be divided into 20% walking, 20% cycling, 20% public transportation, 20% driving, and 20% other (taxis, motorcycles, scooters, roller skates, horses, etc.).

But for the following reasons,

among others, this notion of balance is highly problematic:

(a.) It implies that there’s something inherently wrong with cities such as Venice that do not offer a balance, and do not accommodate all of the above modes;

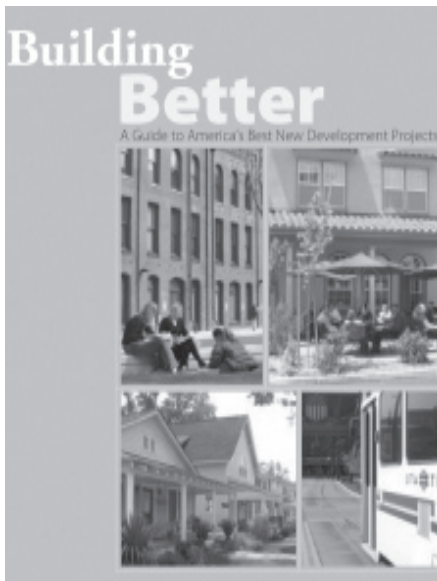
(b.) It fails to recognise that equally accommodating all modes on the same streets or in the same district might result in a conflict or compromise among the modes rather than a true balance, or that there might be workable alternatives to the “level playing field” (which is unachievable anyway), by actually prioritising certain modes over others;

(c.) It is devoid of any critical analysis of particular modes, implying they are all benign and equally worthy of being accommodated, like the food groups in a balanced diet (overlooking for example the fact that cars kill 1.2 million people

“ Walk out the front door of your home and imagine the streetscape as you’d want it if you had to spend the rest of your life in that,”



# Studies & Reports



## Twelve Best US Developments

A new Sierra Club report describes 12 positive examples of new urban developments in the United States that are geared towards people, not cars.

"Building Better: A Guide to America's Best New Development Projects" features pedestrian and transit-oriented developments in cities such as Oakland, California; Tacoma, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; but also in smaller, traditionally "residential" communities.

The projects fall into such categories as smart growth, infill development, or transit-oriented development. Though they are hardly revolutionary, they should offer inspiration for activists, especially those in North America promoting cities for people.

The report can be found on the web at [www.sierraclubplus.org/sprawl/report05/buildingbetter.pdf](http://www.sierraclubplus.org/sprawl/report05/buildingbetter.pdf).

## Cheapest Way to Fight Global Warming? Bikes!

The December edition of Transport Reviews features a report by Lew Fulton and Lloyd Wright of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy showing that, if countries want to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide, the cheapest

alternatives are switching to non-motorised transport or busway systems such as bus rapid transit, which is spreading in developing countries.

The costs of reducing emissions by one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> are an exorbitant US\$3,570 for the much-hyped fuel-cell vehicles and \$148 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> for hybrid-electric vehicles. Non-motorised transit such as bikes or riskshaws, on the other hand, would incur costs of only \$14 per reduced tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, and even bus rapid transit came in as low as \$66 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Carfree Living Good for You

The British group Sustrans has published information detailing the health benefits of living a carfree lifestyle.

The "Active Travel" website addresses the positive effects of walking and biking on physical and mental health. While most of us know that these activities are good for a healthy heart and for keeping fit, the site also describes how regular active travel can help us deal with stress, anxiety, sleep problems, and improve cognitive function. See [www.activetravel.org.uk](http://www.activetravel.org.uk).

## Childhood Car Dependency

Some background on the National Travel Survey, which formed one of the sources for our feature article on page 12: The UK survey was held between 1985/86 and 1995/97. In this period, children aged 16 or less increased their percentage of car trips from 35% to 48% (trips to school by car went up from 16% to 30%, as reported in the article). These trends have led to significant decreases in the amounts of walking and cycling by children.

The project, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), has been working to document this trend. It asked the following questions:

- Does walking affect children's health?
- Are adult attitudes to car use and ownership formed in early childhood?
- How effective are car-alternative projects?
- Does travel mode affect cognitive skills?

The project showed that childhood car use increases in multi-car households, that parents no longer allow their children to walk or take public transit out of fear for their safety, that "walking school buses" can have a positive influence on children's social skills, but also that alternatives to car use are not common enough to have any noticeable impact on congestion. Many of the papers can be found at [www.cts.ucl.ac.uk/research/hcaruse](http://www.cts.ucl.ac.uk/research/hcaruse).

## Truck Owners Want Better Fuel Economy

What improvement do people most want in their pick-ups? Surprisingly, the answer is "better fuel economy." That's the response from pick-up owners surveyed in a new US study conducted on behalf of Environmental Defense.

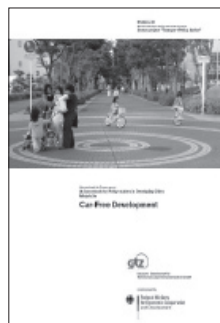
Another finding that shouldn't surprise any carfree activists is the fact that pick-up trucks are used most often for commuting, carrying passengers and personal trips, not for hauling or farm work. This would thus go against the argument that trucks should be exempt from fuel efficiency standards because they are "working" vehicles. The number of pick-ups that actually work in agriculture is less than 4%.

## Biofuels Provide No Net Energy

We have previously reported that if our society was to use biofuels such as ethanol to fuel our energy needs, there would not be enough arable land to grow them. A new study from Cornell

# Reviews

## Car-Free Development Module 3e of Sustainable Transport: A Source-book for Policy-makers in Developing Cities



Lloyd Wright  
produced for  
GTZ, 2005, on-  
line PDF

"At some  
point during  
the previous  
century, our  
streets and  
communities  
were lost.  
Instead

of being places of human  
interaction, they became places  
for operating and storing metal  
machines."

These are the opening words  
of Car-Free Development, a  
brand-new practical guide for  
municipalities, especially those  
fortunate enough to have not  
become fully motorised. Instead  
of emulating the West's history  
of misguided automobile-based  
planning, the idea is to "leap-frog"  
over this, delving straight into  
some cutting-edge car curbing  
projects.

Car-Free Development  
provides a thorough introduction  
to the topic, an exceptionally  
well-produced handbook filled  
with stunning photos and  
captivating diagrams. Wright  
nevertheless calls his manual  
"very much a work in progress"  
and "certainly not the last word  
in car-free possibilities" – as his  
aim is to "stimulate creativity from  
local officials and professionals in  
developing new approaches to  
urban design."

The 168-page document  
emphasises the potential of  
pedestrianised streetscapes,  
covering everything from  
single-day events (carfree days)  
to permanent carfree areas.  
It features captivating colour  
photos taken by Wright and his  
colleagues and an impressive  
array of tables and diagrams.

There's a "car-free spectrum,"  
definitions of carfree terms, a  
list of existing carfree housing  
projects and their characteristics  
– and even a "car-free matrix"  
that compares various existing  
initiatives in terms of scale and  
permanence.

We also find a good illustrated  
overview of street reclaiming  
techniques: outdoor art exhibi-  
tions, farmers' markets, film  
screenings, fashion shows, street  
theatre, street sports and games –  
even mobile clubbing and urban  
pillow fights.

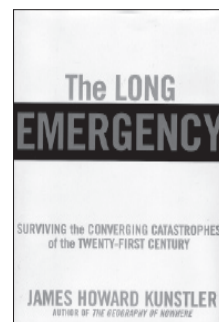
The manual covers the process  
of project development, broken  
down into detailed sections on  
project leadership, institutional  
and legal issues, stakeholders,  
participatory processes, financing  
and implementation.

"Unlike other solutions to  
motorisation, car-free projects  
are unique for their ability to  
simultaneously address (and  
eliminate) a whole range of  
associated problems," Wright  
writes. "[...] For car-free options  
to truly compete against other  
development alternatives,  
recognition of the full set of  
'co-benefits' is essential." And he  
points out that it may be better to  
focus on these co-benefits than  
on the fact that the area is carfree.  
For example, announce the  
opening of an outdoor cinema  
and concert space, rather than  
advertising it as a new carfree  
area (even though it is carfree).  
The former represents something  
almost universally positive,  
whereas people may associate  
"carfree" with "deprivation of a  
resource."

For me, the Street Conversion  
section was the most interesting,  
as it represents the crux of what  
I feel the carfree movement is  
all about – transforming the  
car-dependent urban form into  
a lively, aesthetically pleasing,  
mixed-use human habitat. Wright  
recognises this when he says:  
"Street conversions represent one  
of the most exciting opportunities  
for the car-free movement."

The section includes a diagram

The Long Emergency  
James Howard Kunstler  
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005  
ISBN 0871138883



Barring a  
nuclear war or  
environmental  
catastrophe,  
peak oil will  
be the most  
important  
news story  
of the 21<sup>st</sup>  
century. There  
is a reason

for this: nearly every aspect of  
modern life, from driving cars  
to manufacturing plastics to  
mowing lawns quickly, requires  
cheap oil. It even takes oil to  
manufacture bicycles and walking  
shoes. The existence of easily  
accessible oil is the only reason  
that this planet can support 6.5  
billion human inhabitants. People  
who have access to oil, either  
directly or indirectly, have their  
own personal army division that  
will do whatever is asked of them  
without a peep of rebellion or the  
need for food.

In his new book, *The Long  
Emergency*, James Howard  
Kunstler confronts the issue of  
peak oil, and like any respectable  
gadfly, he is not here to pass  
out rose bouquets. He is no  
a doomsayer like others who  
predict the downfall of our entire  
species in the face of the coming  
energy crisis, but rather he  
thinks that through a concerted  
effort and sensible decisions we  
can pull through it without a  
major breakdown of civilisation.  
But it won't be easy, and it will  
significantly disrupt life as we  
know it.

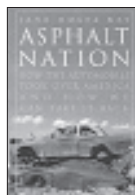
Best known for his scathing  
diatribes against US suburbia,  
Kunstler now delves deeper into  
the specific issue that will make  
suburbia an imposs-ibility. With a  
scarcity of oil, cities will contract,  
and transport of essential goods  
will be reduced to the shortest  
distances possible. This will force  
agriculture near to where people  
live, and the Wal-Marts will suffer  
a brutal and quick death. It will be

# Resources

## Nonfiction

### Asphalt Nation

*How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back*  
**Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages**  
**EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580**



*Asphalt Nation* is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, architectural, and personal solutions, Kay shows that radical change is possible.

### Carfree Cities

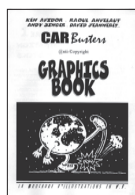
*J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages*  
**EUR 30, £21, US\$35, AU\$50, or CZK 890**



An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, *Carfree Cities* outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life. It gives practical suggestions for implementing Crawford's carfree design in new and existing cities.

### Car Busters Graphics Book

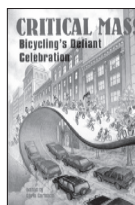
*Car Busters, 1999, 44 pages*  
**EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, CZK 150**



Our graphics book brings together all the best graphics on file at Car Busters from the artists you see in the magazine. Includes information on how to produce attractive posters and leaflets. The graphics can be reproduced freely (for non-profit purposes) by activist groups for their leaflets, posters, newsletters, etc.

### Critical Mass

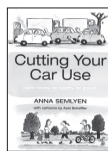
*Bicycling's Defiant Celebration*  
**Chris Carlsson, editor, 2002, 256 pages**  
**EUR 20, £14, US\$23, AU\$32, or CZK 580**



A pushy and irreverent collection of inkworthy social critique and optimistic celebration. Four dozen contributors document, define and drive home the beauty of a quiet ride with a thousand friends, the anarchy of grassroots inspiration, the melodrama of media coverage and the fight for the survival of our cities.

### Cutting Your Car Use

*Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!*  
**Anna Semlyen, 2000 / 2005, 160 pages**  
**EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, CZK 250**  
 Britain's first ever personal traffic reduction guide. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give up the car completely. New updated edition.



### Divorce Your Car!

*Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile*  
**Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages**  
**EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500**  
 The ultimate guide to liberating ourselves from our addiction to cars and the automobile culture. Encourages readers to change their own behaviour, and describes how.

### Earth First! Direct Action Manual

*DAM Collective, 1998, 152 pages*  
**EUR 5, £4, US\$6, AU\$9, or CZK 150**  
 A comprehensive guide to direct action tactics.

### Ecocities: Building Cities

*in Balance with Nature*  
**Richard Register, 2002, 296 pages**  
**EUR 14.50, £10, US\$17, AU\$23, or CZK 425**



A comprehensive collection of well-researched information for concerned citizens from the author of *Ecocity Berkeley: Building Cities for a Healthy Future* and editor of *Village Wisdom: Future Cities*. Here Register, a leading promoter of the idea of "de-paving," presents a set of tools for urban activists to use in shaping the future of their own communities.

### The End of the Road

*Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages*  
**EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250**



There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport and re-arranging our lives.

### For Love of the Automobile

*Looking Back Into the History of Our Desires*  
**Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover**  
**EUR 35, £25, US\$40, AU\$68, or CZK 1,180**

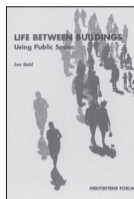


*Home from Nowhere*  
**Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21st Century**  
**James Howard Kunstler, 1998, 320 pages**  
**EUR 14.50, £10, US\$17, AU\$23, or CZK 425**

Kunstler offers a way back from the "tragic sprawlscapes of cartoon architecture, junked cities, and ravaged countryside" that he described in *The Geography of Nowhere*. Here he calls for the restoration of traditional architecture, sensible urban design principles, and the development of public spaces for social interaction.

### Life Between Buildings

*Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages, fourth English edition*  
**EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27, or CZK 500**



A classic is republished and revised. First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. A standard textbook in many architecture and planning schools around the world, it is still the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

### Making Their Own Plans

*Brett Bloom and Ava Bromberg, eds., 2004, 128 pages*  
**EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, CZK 325**

A compilation of articles about concrete projects seeking to reconfigure an undemocratic, polluted, gentrifying city into a more just and livable place.

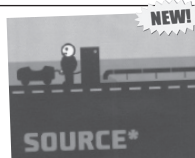
### New City Spaces

*Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 2001, 263 pages*  
**hardcover: EUR 50, £35, US\$60, AU\$80, or CZK 1,500**  
 Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, this informative book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.

### Placemaking Guidebook

*Jenny Leis & Daniel Lerch, City Repair, 2003, 83 pages*  
**EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, or CZK 325**

Learn how to follow in City Repair's footsteps, building places where community can happen, right in the hearts of our neighbourhoods.



**Source\* on DVD**  
 The story of oil in Azerbaijan  
 See video section for details.

**EUR 20 / US\$24**  
 shipping included

### Public Spaces - Public Life

*Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 1996, 96 pages*  
**EUR 32, £22, US\$38, AU\$50, or CZK 950**  
 Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished. Street Reclaiming



### Wise Fool Basics

*K. Ruby, Wise Fool, 1999, 96 pages*  
**EUR 11, £8, US\$13, AU\$18, or CZK 325**

Giant puppet building, masks, street theatre tips, still making... Full of useful information and inspiration for making direct action imaginative, artistic and endlessly creative.

## Fiction/Kids

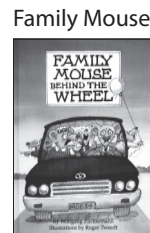
### The Age of the Bicycle

*Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages*  
**EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250**

What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour...

### Alice in Underland

*Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999*  
**EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250**



### Family Mouse Behind the Wheel

*Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages*  
**hardcover: EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250**  
 Colourful illustrated book teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences...

### The Little Driver

*Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages*  
**EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$18, or CZK 250**

## "Freesources"

A growing selection of free texts available at <[www.worldcarfree.net/resources/free.php](http://www.worldcarfree.net/resources/free.php)>:

- *Energy and Equity* by Ivan Illich
- *Hypermobility* by John Adams
- *The Automobile and Décroissance* by Denis Cheynet
- *Time Pollution* by John Whitelegg
- *Depaving the World* by Richard Register
- *Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Roadbuilding*
- *Motorism* by Daniel James

## Postcards



Our line of Carbusters postcards expand our range of consumer products for the entire family! An assortment of ten postcards costs EUR 5 / US\$6 / £4.



## Not finding what you're looking for?

Our members/subscribers get a 10% discount at <[www.detroitpublications.com](http://www.detroitpublications.com)> on over 130 books and other resources on transportation and urban ecology.

## Videos

Source\* **NEW!**  
2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free PAL (plays on all PCs)  
EUR 20, £14, US\$24, AU\$32 or CZK 600

The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption, greed, and Western money flowing into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea. This documentary takes you to the source of Western oil dependency and the human results of oil policy.

The City Repair Project: **NEW!**  
Transforming Space into Place  
2004, 13.5 min., DVD  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250

Highlights the incredible work of The City Repair Project in Portland, Oregon, USA, as featured in *Carbusters* #21.



Autoschreck / Car-Fright  
1994, English or German, PAL only  
EUR 20, £14, US\$24, AU\$32, CZK 600  
Michael Hartmann walks straight over the cars illegally parked on the sidewalk. A documentary about a man discharged from a mental hospital for being perfectly (or at least somewhat) normal.

We Are Traffic! &  
Return of the Scorcher **NEW!**  
1999/1992, 50 min./28 min., NTSC  
EUR 17, £12, US\$20, AU\$27 or CZK 500



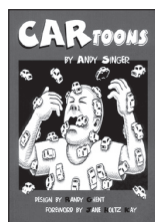
Two classic biking movies now on one DVD, plus extra footage that didn't make it into the documentaries. *Return of the Scorchers* (1992, 28 min.) chronicles the history of the bicycle renaissance (before cars rules the road, cyclists were called "scorchers" because of their speed). *We Are Traffic* (1999, 50 min.) follows the grassroots Critical Mass movement, which

has brought together complete strangers in an exuberant, commercial-free public space filled with creativity & unpredictability.

## Carbusters Press

**Bulk Discount:** Ten or more CARtoons and/or Roadkill Bill books, any combination, for half price.

CARtoons  
Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages, optional CD-ROM  
contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics

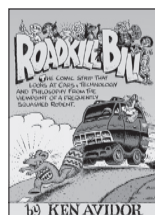


Book: EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
CD-ROM: EUR 4, £3, US\$5, AU\$6.75 or CZK 80

A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to to-day's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's

infamous graphics.

Roadkill Bill



Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages  
EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14, or CZK 250

It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In *Roadkill Bill*, the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome car-toons are collected together for the first time. Avidor gives voice to the

## Stickers

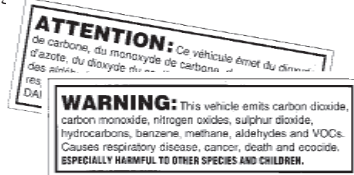
"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

Ten stickers:  
EUR 2, £1.40, US\$2.50, AU\$3.50, or CZK 50  
Available in Chinese, Czech, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian/Swedish/Danish, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Spanish and Welsh. Sized for bike frames, water-resistant.



"Cancer Warning" Stickers

15 stickers: EUR 3, £2, US\$3.50, AU\$5, or CZK 90  
Big hard-to-remove stickers for cars



Available in French, German, English, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian and Czech.

Stop-Sign Improvement

One: EUR 0.85, £0.60, US\$1, AU\$1.30 or CZK 25  
Ten: EUR 6.25, £4.25, US\$7.50, AU\$10 or CZK 180  
Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. These big glossy



vinyl stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs.

## T-Shirts

Towards Carfree Cities

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Yellow, orange, red, forest green, beige; XS, S, M, L



"Carfree"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Black, red, light blue; men: S, M, L, XL; women: S, M, L



## Payment Instructions

### Mail-Order Resources

Shipping (surface rate outside Europe) is included in all prices. We accept US, British, French and Australian cheques made out to Carbusters. Credit card payments can be made on-line at <[www.worldcarfree.net](http://www.worldcarfree.net)>. We also accept international postal money orders (in CZK or USD), and even cash in the currencies below (at your own risk, but seems OK).

Payments: Car Busters, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Rep.

Should you prefer to pay by bank transfer, please contact us.

### Magazine Subscriptions

Country	4 Issues	8 Issues
Australia	20 Dollars	32.50 Dollars
Czech Rep.	160 Korun	260 Korun
Eurozone	16 Euro	26 Euro
UK	10 Pounds	16 Pounds
US	16 Dollars	26 Dollars

### Memberships

Member: EUR 30, £20, US\$30, AU\$50, CZK 600  
Supporter: EUR 50, £35, US\$50, AU\$80, CZK 1000  
Saviour: EUR 100, £70, US\$100, AU\$160, CZK 2000

Membership benefits/premiums are described on the next page.

The prices above are calculated for "Over-Developed World" residents, in each of the currencies that we accept. Single copies cost EUR/US\$4 or equivalent. Eastern Europeans and "Global South" residents wanting magazine subscriptions or single copies can pay 1/3 the Western rate.

Distribution Orders (5 or more copies): EUR/US\$2.60 each or equivalent (you sell at EUR/US\$4 and keep the difference). In Eastern Europe and the "Global South," you buy at EUR/US\$1 and sell at EUR/US\$1.50. This is beginning to sound like the stock market...

### In a Hurry?

Order from [worldcarfree.net/resources](http://worldcarfree.net/resources).

## Carbusters Back Issues

Have an incomplete collection? Looking for a perfect gift? Don't know how to best invest your money for long-term growth? Well, look no further! Get any back issue of Car Busters for a mere EUR 2 / US\$2.50 / £1.75. Or get a complete set for EUR 20 / US\$25 / £17.50 (Western Rate) or EUR 10 / US\$12.50 (Eastern Rate). Or order an assortment of 100 issues for EUR 90 / US\$110



Shipping included  
in all listed prices.

"Parasites"

EUR 8.50, £7, US\$10, AU\$14 or CZK 250  
Black ink on red shirt, white ink on black shirt; men: S, M, L, XL; women: S, M, L







WORLD CARFREE NETWORK WORKS TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN THE GLOBAL CARFREE MOVEMENT. ITS PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS ASSIST PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD TAKING ON CAR CULTURE AND PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIFE. WE AIM TO FACILITATE EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION AMONG ACTIVISTS AND CAMPAIGNERS, REACH OUT TO THE PUBLIC, INSPIRE NEW ACTIVISTS AND CHANGE THE WORLD.

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- PRINT AND ON-LINE RESOURCE CENTRE
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- MOBILITY JUSTICE PROJECT
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- o **Member - US\$30/EUR30/£20\***  
includes a one-year magazine subscription, an assortment of bike stickers and one of these books: Ken Avidor's Roadkill Bill, Andy Singer's CARtoons, or Martin Wagner's The Little Driver. (circle one)
- o **Supporter - US\$50/EUR50/£35\***  
includes a one-year magazine subscription and two of these books: CARtoons, Roadkill Bill, or The Little Driver. (circle two)
- o **Saviour - US\$100/EUR100/£70\***  
includes a two-year magazine subscription, a copy of Carfree Cities by JH Crawford, and one of these books: CARtoons, Roadkill Bill, or The Little Driver. (circle one)
- o US\$16/EUR16\* - Subscription Only: 4 Issues
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# Announcements



## Network Training and AGM in Tábor, CZ: May 22-26

World Carfree Network will hold a five-day series of skill trainings and meetings. The network's AGM (Annual General Meeting) will take place on the final day, May 26.

The event will include expert-led workshops on various topics, such as campaign strategy, fundraising, public communication, video training, volunteer coordination and motivation, and more.

Programme and registration information is at <[www.worldcarfree.net/tabor2006](http://www.worldcarfree.net/tabor2006)>.

## Back Issues of Carbusters

Help us make room in our office by stocking up on old issues of Carbusters magazine. You can order all 25 back issues for only US\$25 or a selection of 100 issues for \$US100 by going to <[www.worldcarfree.net/resources](http://www.worldcarfree.net/resources)>.

## World Carfree News

### E-Bulletin Now in Spanish!

Most of our readers also receive our monthly bulletin of news and announcements from the worldwide carfree movement. As of November, World Carfree News is also published in Spanish, bringing the total number of languages to five: English, Czech, German, French, and Spanish. To sign up, go to <[www.worldcarfree.net/bulletin](http://www.worldcarfree.net/bulletin)>.

## Towards Carfree Cities VI

Our annual conference, scheduled for September 19-23, is being organised by Ciudad Humana in Bogota, Colombia. We hope to especially attract new participants from the Americas. The conference programme has not yet been finalised; to offer input and for information, contact Amalia Rodríguez at <[internacional@ciudadhumana.org](mailto:internacional@ciudadhumana.org)>.

ciudadhumana.org>.

Information will be posted at <[www.worldcarfree.net/conference](http://www.worldcarfree.net/conference)>.

## Ecotopia Biketour:

### Lithuania-Slovakia

Planning is also underway for the 2006 Ecotopia Biketour. As always, the goal of the tour is to travel as a mobile eco-community across Europe to the Ecotopia gathering, which this year is being held near Zvolen, Slovakia, in mid-August. Beginning July 1, cyclists will travel through Lithuania and Poland to Slovakia. Information at <[www.thebiketour.net](http://www.thebiketour.net)>.

## Traffic Taming Tour

In the spring of 2006, David Engwicht, author of *Street Reclaiming: Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities*, will bring his traffic taming advice to cities around the world. Engwicht will be working with a limited number of cities over a one- or two- year period to help them become world leaders in new approaches to traffic.

He will be traveling to Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand, so cities from those regions are invited to apply for a personal visit complete with workshops. More information at <[www.creative-communities.com/Tours](http://www.creative-communities.com/Tours)>.

## Register Now

### for Velo Mondial

Cyclists and cycling enthusiasts are encouraged to register now for Velo Mondial 2006 (March 5-10). This bicycling conference is intended for gov-ernment representatives, planning professionals, and of course manufacturers and users of bicycles. World Carfree Network member group Bicycling Empowerment Network (BEN) will offer work-shops on how bicycle distribution and locally run bicycle workshops are positively influencing dis-advantaged

communities. All info can be found at <[www.velomondial2006.com](http://www.velomondial2006.com)>.

## Call for Entries:

### Bike-Themed Short Films

The fourth annual "Filmed by Bike" festival is looking for short films with bicycling themes. This thrillingly raucous film festival has become a Portland favourite and has sold out every year. Deeply plotted bike love stories, dreams of a world without cars and stories of bikers' triumph over cars fill the silver screen for a night in cele-bration of bike culture around the world.

The films should be on CD or DVD and should be shorter than 10 minutes. The deadline for sub-missions is March 15; the festival takes place on April 6 in Portland, Oregon. In its first three years, the festival grew from 80 to 275 attendees and last year was able to raise US\$2,300 for the Multnomah County Bike Fair, a one-day "carnival of bicycle mayhem and music." For more info, go to <[www.FilmedByBike.org](http://www.FilmedByBike.org)>.

## 'Zine by "Free" Luers

In 2001, Jeffrey "Free" Luers was sentenced to almost 23 years in prison for torching three SUVs less than most murderers or rapists receive, as if cars were more important to society than people. Now Jeff and another imprisoned activist have published Heartcheck, a 35-page 'zine of writings some moving and thought-provoking, some either right-on or knee-jerk radicalism (depending on the reader's political inclinations). Jeff's sentence, is something that should concern all of us, and sales of Heartbreak go to finance his appeals process. To order the 'zine go to <[www.freefreenow.org/heartcheck.html](http://www.freefreenow.org/heartcheck.html)>.

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